COMIX WAVE

WEIRDO 26, the beat goes on. Crumb has done a socially relevant piece this time instead of a big buns fantasy re-run. Very avant-garde depressing stuff. In the letters col we find that Terry Boyce has returned to Jesus, burned all her penis and bondage art, and is admonishing all you underground artists to change your ways or suffer hell and damnation. Hey, and if you're a televangelist, you can stay out of jail for being a thief by curling up in a fetal position and hallucinating. Hail, Hail rock and roll! The 90s are going to be a blast. Phoebe G. did a cute story about some nasty little girls who bury some boy's clothes and pee on them. Tsk! Tsk! I remember Little Lulu doing that sort of thing sans urine back in the forties. Little Who-Lu?

COMIX PLUGOLA

EL VIBORA 113/14, a double issue, has photos of all the artists at a party. $7 from J. M. Berengueur, Plaza Beatas 3, Barcelona, Spain.*

CEREBUS BI-WEEKLY 18 and 19 out, reprinting the early adventures of Dave Sim's aardvark. Aardvark Vanaheim, POB 1674, Station C, Kitchener, Ontario, Canada N2G 4R2. CEREBUS 122 features the 9th installment of Jaka's Story.

Renegade Press has ceased publication for a time. I expect some of their titles will show up on someone else's list.

Eastman and Laird's TEENAGE MUTANT NINJA TURTLES are everywhere. Big movie in 1990. Topp's bubble gum cards. Oy! TMNT 22 has a non-turtle cover though. Shocking. TALES of TMNT ends with #7 (Aug., 1989). The guys are going to focus on the main title.

HSC's MISC! 30 is $1.50 pp., 656 Birch Lane, Gilbert, MN 55741.

UNDERGROUND SURREALIST 5 is a rock and roll issue. $3.00 pp., POB 2565, Cambridge, MA 02238.

UG THE BARBARIAN 4 is 40¢/stamp from Randy H. Crawford, 911 Park St., SW, Grand Rapids, MI 49504-6241. Randy's BIG SISTER 1 is 50¢ /st and so is YOUR DIRTY LIL' COMIX 1. Adults only on most ugs and newaves so send your age statement with the first order.

An upcoming issue of Allen Freeman's SLAM BANG has Clay Geerdes spouting off on a lot of things in an exclusive interview. Allen runs the Fan-Atic Press, 157 Northwood Rd., Frankfort, KY 40601-1477. Send him a buck and get the latest catalog.

COMIX F/X is running a series of historical columns re my reminiscences of the underground and newave comic scenes. The first was a history of eight-pagers, the second about Gary Arlington's 7-centers and the early San Francisco Scene, and the third will be a history of Haight-Ashbury and the part it played in the history of underground comix.

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© Clay Geerdes. Box 7081;, Berkeley, CA 94707. Logo by Mike Morris.

Below: Betty in "Where's Betty", serialized in SKIN TWO.

THE BETTY PAGES 4 has some other pin-ups inside. Boooo! Why should Betty share the spotlight with Steranko's Sheena swipe? You can get Betty at Comic Relief or Comics and Comix in Berkeley. They forgot to put the address in #4. Sorry.

Above: The cover to SHANNA SHE-DEVIL #1 (Dec. 1972).

THE REALIST LIVES. #110 is $2 from Paul Krassner, Box 1230, Venica, CA 90294. Paul will speak at the benefit for the memory of Abbie Hoffman in Berkeley at Ashkenaz, September 17, 1989. It's an evening gig. Call 525-5054 for details.

Edd Vick is coming out with a series of comix, one of them featuring Steve Willis' popular MORTY THE DOG. Send Edd a buck and get his list and the rap on the new comix. 5014-D Roosevelt Way NE, Seattle, WA 98105.

NEWAVE SHORTOONZ 2 is 50¢/stamp from Dan Taylor, 1833 Guntle Rd., NEW LEBANON, OH 45345.

Jerry Riddle has collected his SNOOKY [8 1/2 x 11, 30 pp.], $3 pp from him at 4126 San Roberto 2, Anchorage, AK 99508-2362.

I am selling some of my old ug and newave stuff to make room for new things so if you collect send me a wantlist and I'll make you an offer. Note to those concerned. The Kennedy price guide was done in 1983 and those prices do not reflect the current market, particularly on rare items. C. G.

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MAGIC IN THE COMICS

Magic has made a comeback via science in the eighties. When Billy Batson said SHAZAM! for the first time back in the early forties, a bolt of lightning flashed to earth and the newsboy was instantly transformed into Captain Marvel, a somewhat chubby parody of Superman. When Mandrake looked at an insect and said WORG GIB! that insect became a giant monster worthy of the Japanese horror films that were part of the fall-out from Hiroshima and Nagasaki in 1945. Mandrake worked his magic by making his commands in reverse English. In an late forties newspaper strip, Russell Stamm's SCARLET O'NEILL touched her left wrist with her fingers and became INVISIBLE SCARLET O'NEILL while in TICK TOCK TALES, a little girl named Judy found that everything she drew with her magic chalk came to life. Aladdin rubbed a lamp and a Genie magically granted the boy's wishes in the days of the Arabian Nights. Whatever King Midas touched turned to gold. There was Magic everywhere when I was a kid, and it was usually taken for granted. Hey, in Sunday school, Jesus was raising the dead, and walking on water. The transition to the funny papers was easy. SHAZAM! and I was an instant grown-up.

For a time, reality reared it's ugly head. After all, during a world war that killed millions of people and ended with one of history's most inhuman crimes, the simple fantasies from Sunday school and the funny books became inane. At the tail end of my childhood, an insane drunk named Joe McCarthy was on television accusing everyone who had ever had a thought of being a communist or a communist dupe. No wonder Elvis Presley came along and got all shook up.

Do you believe in magic? sang the Lovin' Spoonful. In the sixties, drug magic came along. People swallowed Orange Wedgies or Purple Haze or some other brand of LSD and experienced an intensity of perception that was comparable to magic. Indeed, the period was often referred to as the Magic Age in papers like the San Francisco ORACLE and Los Angeles FREE PRESS. Magic returned to the comics in Marvel's DR. STRANGE and in the acid fantasies of Robert Crumb in BIG ASS COMICS. A new generation of strange mythical beasts and creatures drifted through the pages of underground comix as political reality clashed with science fantasy.

Yesterday's fantasies tend to become today's realities. It took hundreds of animators years to create SNOW WHITE AND THE SEVEN DWARFS and GULLIVER'S TRAVELS. Today computers can animate in nanoseconds. When I was a kid, I used to type up little stories on small colored slips of paper and draw illustrations for the stories. Today I create a file in Word and if I want to spend the time I can easily produce and publish my own book. What I could not dream of doing in the forties is now taken for granted. My early newsletters were produced on an old Underwood portable typewriter and printed by Postal Instant Press on an offset press. Today I typeset the newsletter in Word and run it on a state of the art Xerox machine. It takes about five minutes to print the newsletter. Several years worth of articles along with my mailing list and correspondance files fit on a Sony

disc I keep in my shirt pocket. I can carry a couple of novels in progress around and stop in at any computer rental place and write when the mood hits me. As a kid I would have thought all of this the most impossible fantasy imaginable--magic. In my childhood, phonograph records were big and you played them on a heavy machine and the selection of music was fairly small and uniform. Today anyone can carry a few dozen favorite songs on cassette tapes and listen to them on a machine that fits easily into a shirt or skirt pocket. I always enjoyed Dick Tracy and Batman, because they were up on the latest technological magic. Tracy started out with a two-way wrist radio, went to a tv, and now wears a wrist computer, but what was once comic strip stuff is now real. If you want a wrist t-v, Casio makes one you can buy. I would have loved one of those micro-tvs as a boy, but my eyes aren't that good today, so I have to pass.

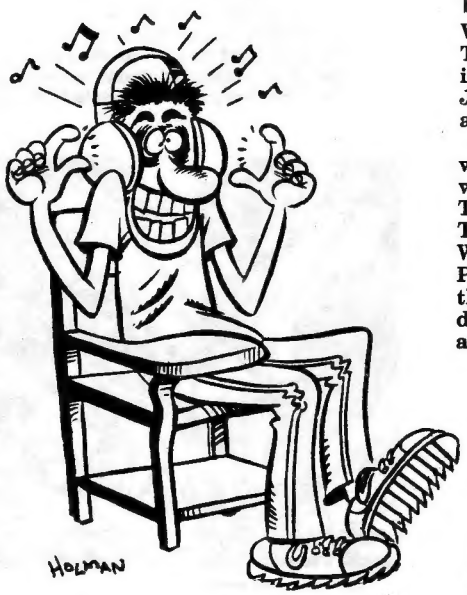
I'd like to say that some things that are magic are likely to remain that way forever, but two or three hundred years down the line someone would contradict me. I doubt that anyone will be able to invent a transporter a la the one on the Enterprise in STAR TREK. It's unlikely anyone will ever travel through time. I don't think the dead return as they do in teen slasher films. I think they just decay and return to earth. The entire cryogenics trip makes me laugh. People paying fortunes to have themselves frozen so they can be revived in the deep future when medical science has perfected cures for the cancers that killed them. What a joke. Who would want to return to life a hundred years in the future? For what? To be a freak on display in a museum? Woody Allen's SLEEPER was a funny movie, but it was also the ultimate horror fantasy.

It was the remembrance of magic past that lead George Lucas to STAR WARS in 1975. It was no accident that the four main characters were closely analogous to the quartet that went to the Emerald City of Oz. Magic has a lot of appeal in the type of world that has developed in our time, a world overpopulated and exploited. Reality is not pleasant and it is usually evaded by the evening news which is rarely anything but carefully structured entertainment . In the real world, Indiana Jones and James Bond die young, fashion models are more likely to be gay than sleeping with spies, and justice rarely traps the guilty. I just read Debbie Reynolds autobiography and she said she hired one of the top accounting agencies in Los Angeles to handle the money on her Broadway show, IRENE. When she wrote a check on the account, it returned for insufficient funds and la Reynolds found that the woman assigned to her account had stolen not just a few dollars, but the entire amount. $160,000. So the firm had her arrested and fired her, you think? Not a bit of it. They not only didn't fire her. They forced Reynolds to sue them for the money and they fought the case in court. They lost eventually, but they kept the criminal. There's a nice example for young people.

Magic is different. We know when Bond goes after a criminal, no lawyer is going to protect him or her from justice. It's easy to understand why wish-fulfillment fantasies like LETHAL WEAPON sell so well. They provide a momentary satisfaction for the ordinary person who feels helpless in the face of the kind of blatant corruption that now rules on Wall Street and in Washington. That's why BATMAN was a failure in my estimation. A psycho like The Joker is not our problem. Financiers and politicians are.

Expect another decade of magic with half the world at war. We'll be watching DICK TRACY and THE TEENAGE MUTANT NINJA TURTLES in 1990 and hey, Wonder Woman will be 50 in 1991 along with Plastic Man and gee, we can have all these great cartoon movies and drinking cups and towels and badges and bubble-gum cards.

What, me worry?



Minicomix are a good way to learn the business end of comix without spending the family fortune. It's fun. You get into print immediately, link up with other cartoonists and fans, and get to have your own shoebox collection of some of the weirdest art being produced in the underground of the eighties.